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YAHWEH, THE SUN-GOD, WANTS A NEW TEMPLE
THEOLOGICAL CORRECTIONS IN 1KGS 8:12–13/3Reg 8:53^a

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Introduction

First Kings 8 deals with the inauguration of the temple after it had been built (1Kgs 5–7). The textual history of the chapter is very complicated,¹ as the main textual witnesses differ considerably throughout the chapter. This was caused, at least in part, by heavy editing in the early transmission of the text, and accordingly source and redaction critical investigations have identified successive additions from several editors in the chapter.² On the other hand, some of the differences between the textual witnesses may have been caused by later revisions and theological corrections.

This paper focuses on verses 12–13 (verse numbers of the Masoretic text \approx 3Reg 8:53^a), which are probably part of the oldest text of the chapter and may preserve a vestige of an ancient text or tradition.³ Like many other parts of the chapter, these verses contain several textual problems, but here also the meaning of the text in the main witnesses is perplexing. It is unclear who is speaking to whom and which part of the verses belong to which speaker. The subject is also ambiguous; it is uncertain whether the word $\text{בית}/\text{οἶκος}$ refers to the temple or the palace.⁴ The division of the sentence constituents into different sentences has caused further discussion. Moreover, the location of the verses in the Greek versions differs from that

¹ The complications of 1Kgs 3–10 are discussed and illustrated by Julio Trebolle, ‘Authoritative Scripture as Reflected in the Textual Transmission of the Biblical Books: The Case of 1Kings 3–10,’ in Mladen Popović (ed.), *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 93–116, here pp. 105–115.

² See, for example, Ernst Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige 1.Könige 1–16* (ATD 11,1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), pp. 84–103, and more recently Petri Kasari, *Nathan’s Promise in 2 Samuel 7 and Related Texts* (PFES 97; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2009), pp. 110–173.

³ Thus many; for example, I. Benzinger, *Bücher der Könige* (KHC IX; Freiburg i.B.: J. C. B. Mohr, 1899), p. 59; John Gray, *I & II Kings* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 196–197; Würthwein, *Könige*, pp. 88–89; G. H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings* (NCBC; vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 196–197. However, according to Kasari, *Nathan’s Promise*, 121–125, these verses do not derive from a source but from the history writer’s pen. His main argument for this is the fact that the literary scope of these verses is different from the source, which, according to Kasari (p. 123), ‘does not have any connection with the building of the temple.’ Without trying to engage in the complex discussion about the literary development of the whole chapter, the results of this paper strongly suggest that these verses are very ancient and certainly of pre-exilic in origin, which implies that they do not derive from the history writer. On the other hand, many scholars have assumed that these verses are a late addition; thus, for example, Würthwein, *Könige*, pp. 88–89 and Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, pp. 196–197. Although possible, this does not diminish the probability that the verses preserve an ancient tradition, which is suggested by the content. It should further be noted that the different location of the passage in the LXX and MT suggests that it has been relocated and thus secondarily inserted in at least one of the present contexts.

⁴ It is relatively certain that the Greek version refers to both the temple and palace. Many scholars have suggested that the Hebrew version refers to the palace as well; thus, for example, Gray, *I & II Kings*, pp. 196–197.

of the Masoretic text: In the Greek versions a parallel to these verses is found only after v. 53 (labelled v. 53^a).⁵ The Greek also provides a substantially longer text than the Masoretic version.⁶ Because of these textual problems, there have been many attempts to reconstruct the original text.⁷ The main witnesses of the passage are the Septuagint and the Masoretic text, although the Old Latin also provides a clue about the original text, as we will see.⁸

Analysis

1Kgs 8:12–13

¹² Then Solomon said:

‘Yahweh said that he would live in darkness

¹³ I have truly built you an exalted house

A place for you to live forever.’

¹² אָז אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה

יְהוָה אָמַר לְשֹׁכֵן בְּעֶרְפֹּל

¹³ בָּנָה בְּנִיתִי בֵּית זָבֵל לָךְ

מְכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ עוֹלָמִים

3Reg 8:53^a

Then Solomon said regarding the house,
when he had finished building it:

‘The Lord let the Sun know in the heaven

He said that he would live in darkness:

Build my house,

exalted house for yourself

to dwell in anew

Behold, is this not written

in the Book of the Song/Righteous?’⁹

Τότε ἐλάλησεν Σαλωμών ὑπὲρ τοῦ οἴκου

ὡς συνετέλεσεν τοῦ οἰκοδομήσαι αὐτόν

Ἦλιον ἐγνώρισεν ἐν οὐρανῷ κύριος

εἶπεν τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐν γνόφῳ

οἰκοδόμησον οἶκόν μου,

οἶκον ἐκπρεπῆ σαυτῷ

τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ καινότητος.

οὐκ ἰδοὺ αὕτη γέγραπται

ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ὥδης;

⁵ According to Treballe, ‘The Case of 1 Kings 3–10,’ pp. 106–107, ‘mobile’ units – passages, verses or sections found in different positions in the LXX and MT – have often ‘entered into the main text late.’ Although this possibility cannot be excluded for our text, its content implies a very ancient origin, as we will see. Martin Rösel, ‘Salomo und die Sonne. Zur Rekonstruktion des Tempelweihspruchs 1 Reg 8,12f. ZAW 121 (2009). pp. 402–417, here pp. 403–404, 413, has noted that neither of the locations is ideal and that the verse(s) could be a later addition in both the MT and LXX.

⁶ It should be pointed out that there are no variants between the Greek witnesses that would have a decisive impact on the main arguments of this paper. Nevertheless, the variant Greek readings should be noted. The most significant difference is in the Antiochian text (mss. b10xc2e2) which reads καὶ εἶπε instead of εἶπεν. This is probably a late attempt to clarify the text and runs counter to the oldest text (see the reconstruction below). The Antiochian text (mss. b10c2e2) also reads ἔστησεν instead of ἐγνώρισεν, but this is probably a secondary development, as it tries to make sense out of the perplexing sentence: ‘The Lord placed the Sun in the heaven,’ which is well in line with the creation story in Gen 1. Moreover, many Greek manuscripts erroneously read ἐκ γνόφῳ, but the context suggests that one should follow Codex Alexandrinus and other witnesses and read ἐν γνόφῳ instead.

⁷ For a recent review and evaluation of the reconstructions, see Martin Rösel, ‘Salomo und die Sonne,’ pp. 402–417.

⁸ Being evidently dependent on the MT, the Vulgate, Targum Jonathan and 2Chr 6:1–2 (both MT and LXX) do not provide additional help in this passage. The passage is not preserved in the Biblical manuscripts of Qumran.

⁹ Many scholars assume that השיר and הישר were confused. Thus, for example, Benzinger, *Könige*, p. 59 and Carl Steuernagel, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1912), p. 357. The book of the righteous is also mentioned in Josh 10:13 and 2Sam 1:18.

Despite its length, it is probable that the Greek does not contain an expanded and secondary text in relation to the Masoretic version. The plusses in the Greek text contain theological conceptions that contradict many texts of the Hebrew Bible and their addition would run counter to the typical textual development that can be observed in the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, the apparent clarity of the Masoretic text against the somewhat confusing Greek suggests that the Masoretic text has been polished (*lectio difficilior potior*). Consequently, it is commonly assumed that the Greek contains readings that are older than the Masoretic text and that the Masoretic text has been theologically revised.¹⁰ Although probably closer to the original than the Masoretic text, many scholars have assumed that parts of the Greek text are also corrupted, and therefore it has been used only as the basis for the reconstruction of the original text.¹¹

One of the most radical reconstructions has been proposed by Othmar Keel.¹² He has argued that the Greek text preserves vestiges of a text where the Sun-god invited Yahweh to live in the darkness of his temple.¹³ The oldest text would not only imply that the Israelites worshipped the Sun-god, but it would also suggest that he was superior in power to Yahweh,

¹⁰ Thus many; for example, Gray, *I & II Kings*, pp. 196–197; Würthwein, *Könige*, pp. 88–89; Jürgen Werlitz, *Die Bücher der Könige* (NSK AT; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002), p. 94. For example, according to Adrian Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1Rois 2–14* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 48; Paris: J. Cabalda et C^{ie} Éditeurs, 2000), pp. 131, 134, the revision took place in the 2nd century BCE. Nevertheless, according to Martin Sweeney, *I & II Kings* (OTL; Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), p. 132, 'the obscurity of the MT suggests that it is the original text, which the LXX attempts to clarify.' He accordingly interprets the plusses in the LXX as clarifications in relation to the MT. This is a very unlikely position because the plusses of the LXX mainly contain theologically offensive material that is unlikely to have been inserted at a late stage. Friedhelm Hartenstein, 'Sonnengott und Wettergott,' in J. Männchen and T. Reiprich (eds.), *Mein Haus wird ein Bethaus für alle Völker genannt werden (Jes 56,7)* (FS T. Willi; Neukirchner: Neukirchner Verlag, 2007), pp. 53–69, here esp. pp. 65–69, has also argued that the LXX is younger than the MT. He suggests that the Greek version contains Hellenistic conceptions of creation. Many scholars, such as Martin Arneith, 'Sonne der Gerechtigkeit' *Studien zur Solarisierung der Jahwe-Religion im Lichte von Ps 72* (BZAW 1; Wiesbaden, 2000), 201, and Berndt Janowski, 'JHWH und der Sonnengott. Aspekte der Solarisierung JHWHs in vorexilischer Zeit' in *Die rettende Gerechtigkeit* (BTAT 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1999), 203, have assumed that the verse implies the subordination of the sun to Yahweh, but in view of the corrections that various later scribes and/or editors have made in the transmission of the verse, this is unlikely.

¹¹ Thus many scholars; for example, I. Benzinger, *Bücher der Könige* (KHC IX; Freiburg i.B.: J. C. B. Mohr, 1899), 59; Martin Noth, *Könige* (BK, 1968), p. 172; Gray, *I & II Kings*, p. 196; Schenker, *Septante*, pp. 134–135; O. Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems* (Orte und Landschaften der Bibel; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), pp. 267–270; Kasari, *Nathan's Promise*, p. 121 (footnote 63). For a review of many attempts in the early research to understand and reconstruct these verses, see James A. Montgomery, *The Book of Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1944), pp. 189–192.

¹² See also Ernst Axel Knauf, 'Le roi est mort, vive le roi! A Biblical Arguments for the Historicity of Solomon,' in L. K. Handy (eds.), *The Age of Solomon*, (SHCANE 11; Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 81–95, here pp. 82–86, and Hartenstein, Sonnengott und Wettergott, pp. 53–69. For a discussion about these reconstructions, see Rösel, 'Salomo und die Sonne,' pp. 406–410. Knauf's suggestion (p. 84) that the god El should be added after the word is speculative and finds no textual support.

¹³ Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems* (Orte und Landschaften der Bibel; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), pp. 267–271, 'Der Salomonische Tempelweihspruch. Beobachtungen zum religionsgeschichtlichen Kontext des Ersten Jerusalemer Tempels' in *Gottesstadt und Gottesgarten* (QD 191; ed. O. Keel and E. Zenger; Freiburg i. Br., 2002), pp. 269–306, and 'Sturmgott – Sonnengott – Einziger. Ein neuer Versuch, die Entstehung des jüdischen Monotheismus historisch zu verstehen' in *Bibel und Kirche* 49/1 (1994), pp. 82–92, here p. 86. His reconstruction is followed by many, for example, Juliane Kutter, *nūr ilī. Die Sonnengötter in den nordwestsemitischen Religionen von der Spätbronzezeit bis zur vorrömischen Zeit* (AOAT 346; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2008), pp. 359–363.

because he was in a position to invite Yahweh into his temple. These embarrassing theological conceptions would have caused later editors to revise the text. Keel's reconstruction is a significant improvement in relation to the traditional reconstructions, but the development of the passage may be even more complicated than what he has suggested.

Against many scholars, Keel has rightly noted that ἥλιον ἐγνώρισεν ἐν οὐρανῷ κύριος would imply a very improbable word order in the Hebrew *Vorlage* (object > verb > prepositional expression > subject).¹⁴ Although in the Greek version the Sun is in the accusative (ἥλιον), the Hebrew *Vorlage* would have had only the word שמש(ה), which, as such, does not reveal its case, and therefore the Greek accusative has to be seen as an interpretation. It is possible that שמש was the original subject, while the Greek translator would have inevitably disregarded such a possibility as theologically offensive or even impossible because the Sun would be speaking. In the Second Temple context of the Greek translator such a conception would have been rejected. However, if we follow this hypothesis and assume that the Sun is the original subject, Yahweh becomes redundant in this sentence, and it then logically becomes part of the following sentence, where it would function as its subject. This is suggested by the fact that in Hebrew it is much more common to find the subject at the beginning of the sentence than at the very end.¹⁵ Moreover, this division of the sentences would make more sense because the speaker of the verb אמר in the following sentence is otherwise unclear. If the reconstructed division is accepted, there would be two sentences, the Sun being the subject of the first sentence, and Yahweh that of the second.¹⁶

Keel suggests that the second sentence is a quotation of what the Sun-god has just said. The Sun-god lets it be known from the heavens that 'Yahweh has said that he wants to live in the darkness.' Following Keel, the text would consist of a speech by Solomon, who quotes the Book of Righteousness, which quotes the Sun-god, who quotes Yahweh.¹⁷ Although such a quotation string is not entirely impossible, it is very peculiar and makes the text particularly confusing. The change in the speaker from the Sun-god to Yahweh is not clearly marked, and it remains unclear who is speaking to whom in the sentence beginning with οἰκοδόμησον οἶκόν μου ...'. A different reading may be more probable.

The text is obviously written in ancient poetic form, but Keel and others have failed to recognize the strong parallelism and use it as a key to understanding the text. As shown by

¹⁴ Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, pp. 268–269.

¹⁵ In fact, it is difficult to find examples of sentences in Hebrew where the subject is placed after all the other sentence constituents including prepositional expressions.

¹⁶ Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, p. 269.

¹⁷ Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, pp. 267–271.

Loretz, parallelism was an essential part of ancient Israelite poetic texts,¹⁸ and this is probably the case in our text as well. Instead of Shemesh making known what Yahweh has said, there seems to be a parallelism between ἐγνώρισεν and εἶπεν, which probably go back to the Hebrew words ידע hi. and אמר.¹⁹ When we see the text as consisting of cola with *parallelismus membrorum*, it emerges that the two sentences are part of the same bicolon. Both cola contain parallel elements and also partly overlap in meaning, as is typical of poetical parallelism. In addition, both cola contain information lacking in the other colon:

ἥλιον (שמש)	ἐγνώρισεν (הודיע)	ἐν οὐρανῷ (בשמים)
κύριος (יהוה)	εἶπεν (אמר)	τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐν γνόφῳ (לשכן בערפל)
The Sun-god	made it known	in the heavens
Yahweh	proclaimed	that he would live in darkness

Following the rules of ancient Northwest Semitic poetry, this reading implies that the subjects are also identical (cf. the verbs which are also synonymous in meaning).²⁰ That the context implies the subject to be fully clear (= one) is seen in the following sentences, which do not specify the subject who is speaking. Yahweh and the Sun-god are the same subject and this must have been clear to the original author of the verse. If they had been separate, one would expect the text to specify who is speaking, but this is not the case. Consequently, instead of assuming that the Sun-god made it known in the heavens that Yahweh wants to live in a temple, as suggested by Keel, the Sun god himself, who is also called Yahweh, made it known that he would like to live in the darkness of a temple.²¹

The idea that Yahweh was the Sun-god would have been theologically problematical after the destruction of 587 BCE, and this may be the reason why the first colon of the bicolon

¹⁸ See, for example, Oswald Loretz, *Die Psalmen II. Beitrag der Ugarit-Texte zum Verständnis von Kolometrie und Textologie der Psalmen. Psalm 90–150* (AOAT 207/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979) and Oswald Loretz and Ingo Kottsieper, *Colometry in Ugaritic and Biblical Poetry: Introduction, Illustrations and Topical Bibliography* (UBL 5, Altenberge: CIS-Verlag, 1987).

¹⁹ As argued by Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, pp. 268–269, the verb ἐγνώρισεν is probably a translation of the verb ידע hi. and not of בין hi., as suggested by many, for example J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (1899), p. 269, and followed by many, for example Benzinger, *Könige*, p. 59; M. Noth, *Könige*, p. 172; Gray, *I & II Kings*, pp. 196–197 and Knauf, 'Le roi est mort', pp. 82–83. Wellhausen and Knauf further assume that בין hi. is a mistake for הכין, but the evident parallelism between ידע hi. (or בין hi.) and אמר suggests that this is probably incorrect. This parallelism also suggests that the reading ἐστῆσεν in manuscripts b10c2e2 is probably secondary and that ἐγνώρισεν is original.

²⁰ Although two cola may certainly include different subjects, in this case it is improbable because the verbs are parallel in meaning and the form of the parallelism is such that both cola contain information not included in the other.

²¹ Thus contra Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, p. 269.

was omitted completely in the Masoretic text. The Greek version preserves a text closer to the original, but the translation is also an example of an aversion of the theological problem. By rendering שמש in the accusative and Yahweh in the nominative, Yahweh was made the subject and the whole sentence was blurred. The translator may not have even wanted to provide a meaningful sentence, but instead of rewriting the whole passage, he merely rendered it incomprehensible. It is also possible that the Greek translator was already so detached from ancient conceptions that the possibility of Yahweh being identified with the Sun-god might have been unimaginable, and therefore he could not understand the original meaning of the passage.

The expression בנה בניתי (inf. constructus and perfect) of the Masoretic text is rendered in the Greek version as οἰκοδομήσων οἱ αὐτοὶ μου. Many scholars since Wellhausen have rightly assumed that the Greek is a translation of בנה ביתי (imperative and noun), the Masoretic text thus being a secondary reading.²² Following these considerations, the Hebrew *Vorlage*²³ of 3Reg 8:53^a should be read and divided into parallel sections as follows:²⁴

Then Solomon said regarding the house,	אז אמר שלמה על הבית
when he had finished building it:	ככלות לבנות אתו
‘The Sun(-God) let it be known in the heavens	שמש הודיע בשמים
Yahweh said that he wants to live in darkness	יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל
Build my house (temple)	בנה ביתי
(and) an exalted house (palace) for yourself	בית זבל לך
(a place) for you to live anew.’	לשבתך לחדש

²² Wellhausen, *Composition*, p. 271.

²³ It is necessary to reconstruct the *Vorlage* of the Greek text, but one should be particularly cautious in this enterprise. On the principles, see Anneli Aejmelaeus, ‘What Can We Know about the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint.’ in *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators. Collected Essays* (Leuven et al.: Peeters, 2007), pp. 71–106 (here pp. 71–78). As noted by Schenker, *Septante*, p. 131, it is probable that the variant readings in the Greek of this verse are based on a Hebrew *Vorlage* because many of the expressions find a ready equivalent in Hebrew. Some scholars are skeptical about the possibility of reconstructing the *Vorlage* of the LXX. Thus, for example, Rösel, ‘Solomo und die Sonne,’ pp. 403–404, 406, 410.

²⁴ Similarly, Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, p. 269. Among others, Kasari, *Nathan’s Promise*, p. 121, has rightly reconstructed the *Vorlage*, but he has failed to recognize the parallelism which is the key for the correct alignment of the cola and for understanding the meaning of the passage. Much of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX version can be reconstructed on the basis of the MT. The Hebrew original for ἐπὶ καινότητος is unclear, because the word καινότης is only met in one additional passage, Ezek 47:12, where it refers to the monthly fresh fruit (ὁ καρπὸς αὐτοῦ τῆς καινότητος). It is unlikely that in 3 Reg 53^a the word καινότης refers to a monthly event where the divinity settles in the temple. This idea would be logical for a Moon-god but not for a Sun-god. With some reservation, I will follow Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, 270, in assuming that καινότης is a rendering of the Hebrew לחדש. Other alternatives would be על חדשים or על חדש but they would not alter the meaning.

However, the textual problems of the passage do not end here. The idea that Solomon would have spoken about the temple *and* the palace is confusing. It would be peculiar that the construction of the temple and the palace are both discussed in this text. The whole context in 1Kgs 8 deals with the inauguration of the temple, and the Greek text even explicitly says that what Solomon says relates to the temple (ὕπὲρ τοῦ οἴκου ὡς συνετέλεσεν τοῦ οἰκοδομῆσαι αὐτόν). This reference has been omitted in the Masoretic text possibly because it conflicted with the text's content, which discusses the palace as well. It is thus unlikely that the Hebrew reading *בית זבל לך*, followed by the Greek *οἶκον ἐκπρεπῆ σαυτῷ*, is original, because a reference to the palace would be a disturbing digression and would break the parallelism one would expect.

As many scholars have suggested, the Old Latin of 1–2Kings occasionally preserves ancient readings that are older than those of the other witnesses.²⁵ Although harmonizing in parts of the verse,²⁶ one Old Latin witness, Codex Legionensis, may contain a vestige that is not preserved in other witnesses. Instead of *οἰκοδομήσον οἶκόν μου, οἶκον ἐκπρεπῆ σαυτῷ* τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ καινότητος (< *בנה ביתי בית זבל לך לשבתך לחדש*), Codex Legionensis reads *aedifica mihi domum pulcherrimam in habitare in novitiate*.²⁷ The second person (*לך*, *לשבתך*, or *σαυτῷ*) finds no correspondence in this codex.²⁸ This means that the subject of discussion in Codex Legionensis is unequivocally the temple and not the palace,²⁹ which would fit well

²⁵ Thus, Julio Trebolle Barrera, *Solomon y Jeroboan. Historia de la recensión y redacción de 1 Reyes, 2–12,14* (Bibl. Salamanticensis, Salamanca, 1980), *passim*, and Natalio Fernández Marcos, *Scribes & Translators. Septuagint & Old Latin in the Books of Kings* (VT Supp; Leiden et al.: Brill, 1994), pp. 84–87 and Schenker, *Septante*, p. 131.

²⁶ For example, it assumes that Yahweh was the subject and the Sun the object: ‘*Tunc loquutus est Salomon pro domo, quam consummavit aedificans: Solem statuit in caelo Dominus; et dixit commorare in dedicationem domus: aedifica mihi domum pulcherrimam in habitare in novitiate. Nonne haec scripta sunt in libro Cantici?*’

²⁷ Carolus Vercellone, *Variae Lectiones Vulgatae Latinae Bibliorum Editionis*, vol. II (Rome, 1864), p. 489. It should be stressed that in this text the Old Latin thus disagrees with both the LXX and the Antiochian texts. Cf. Fernández Marcos, *Scribes & Translators*, pp. 41–52, who discusses this issue in more detail. The present verse would provide a case where internal evidence suggests that the Old Latin preserves a text that is closer to the original text than all Greek witnesses.

²⁸ The sentence *aedifica mihi domum pulcherrimam in habitare in novitiate* probably reflects the following original Hebrew that was behind the Greek from which the Old Latin witness was translated: *בנה (ביתי) בית זבל לי לשבת לחדש*. The word *ביתי* is necessary for the poetic form, but since the poetic form is not preserved in the Latin translation, the word has become redundant and was omitted.

²⁹ Already Wellhausen, *Composition*, p. 271, noticed that the second person suffix in *לך* must be a mistake, but he failed to notice that the Old Latin would have provided support for assuming so. Nevertheless, his reconstruction of the other parts of the text is problematical, because it is not based on textual evidence. Using the Greek he reconstructed the Hebrew text as follows:

Die Sonne hat er geschaffen, Jahwe	שמש הכין בשמים יהוה
doch hat er wollen wohnen im Dunkeln und gesprochen:	אמר לשכן בערפל
bau mir ein Haus,	בנה ביתי
ein Haus meiner Heimstatt,	בית בוא לי
dass ich dort ewig wohne.	לשבת לחדש

with the introductory speech of the verse which implies that only the temple is discussed. Accordingly, it is probable that the second person suffix in לך and לשבתך is secondary. Moreover, on the basis of the Old Latin reading it is possible to deduce that the original text contained a parallelism and a functional bicolon, as the first person suffix in לי accords with the suffix of ביתי:

Build my house,	בנה ביתי
an exalted house for me	בית זבל לי

The reason for the corrections in the other witnesses is obvious. Because the text originally continued לשבת לחדש (or לשבת על חדשים < τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ καινότητος), it seemed to suggest that Solomon was ordered to build a *new* temple for Yahweh the Sun-god.³⁰ Of course, some passages in 2Samuel imply that there had been a temple of Yahweh before Solomon,³¹ but this text would make it explicit and contradict many other texts.³² The textual correction by adding the suffix in לשבתך made the new temple into a new house of the king, which would not have been theologically problematical and would fit well with 2Sam 5:11 and 1Kgs 7:1–12, according to which David had a palace and that Solomon built a new one for himself.³³ In the Masoretic text the idea of a new house was removed altogether by replacing the word חדש with עולם, but this correction only confirms that the original text was theologically offensive. The correction may also have been made in view of Yahweh's promise of an eternal dynasty.³⁴

Another theological problem was the idea that the divinity would live in the temple. This idea, which is evidently ancient, has caused problems for many later editors and interpreters of the Hebrew Bible. Deuteronomy, for example, tries to avoid this problem by suggesting that only Yahweh's name lives in the temple (e.g., Deut 12:11, 21; 16:2, 6), but this is a conception that emerged after the destruction of 587 BCE.³⁵ The fact that the word בית could refer to either one certainly facilitated the correction in the Greek version, which refers

³⁰ As already noted above, the Hebrew *Vorlage* for ἐπὶ καινότητος is unclear. In the present context, which deals with the building of a house, however, it is very probable that the word καινότητος refers to the new place of habitation.

³¹ For example, 2Sam 12:20; 22:7.

³² Many parts of 1–2Sam, especially 2Sam 7, emphasize that there had not been a temple before Solomon. Yahweh had lived in the tabernacle or a tent and not in a house (2Sam 7:2, 6–7).

³³ Many passages in 2Samuel explicitly refer to David's palace (for example 2Sam 5:11; 7:1; 11:2, 9). The building of Solomon's palace is described in 1Kgs 7:1–12.

³⁴ As Yahweh promised to keep the Davidic dynasty forever, Solomon would have built an eternal dwelling for the future kings of the dynasty. Cf., especially 2Sam 7:13: הוא יבנה בית לשמי וכננתי את־כסא ממלכתו עד־עולם.

³⁵ Note that the LXX of the parallel passage in 2Chr 6:2 has avoided the problem in this passage by referring to the name that lives in the temple (ὄνομα τῷ ὁνόμενῳ σου). This reading is clearly influenced by Deuteronomy.

to both the temple and the palace. The offensive reference to the house was changed into a palace, although the original text clearly referred to a temple. Obviously, nobody would be offended by the idea that the king lives in his palace.³⁶

The word מֶכֶן in the Masoretic text provides the final illustration of how complicated the development (and thus also the reconstruction) of the passage is. The word is missing in the other witnesses, whereas in the Masoretic text it seems to refer to the palace. It is probable that the word is original and it shows that any reference to the palace must be incorrect. It also confirms that the suffixes in לֶךְ and לִשְׁבֶּתֶךָ are secondary and that one should follow the Codex Legionensis (*mihi*) and read לִי and לִשְׁבֶּת instead. As 1Kgs 8:39, 43 and 49 show, מֶכֶן הַשֶּׁבֶת is used in the chapter to refer to the temple. In other parts of the Hebrew Bible, the expression מֶכֶן הַשֶּׁבֶת always refers to Yahweh's temple or his other place of habitation (heavenly or earthly sanctuary).³⁷ With one exception in the plural (Ps 104:5),³⁸ the other uses of the word מֶכֶן also refer to Yahweh's temple or abode.³⁹ Its use in the Masoretic text of 1Kgs 8:13 suggests that it was part of the original text, because its addition would be very difficult to explain. In comparison, in the Greek⁴⁰ the word or its translation was left out because it fits poorly to its new context where it could be seen to refer to the palace of the king. Its use in the Masoretic text confirms that the whole passage was originally only about the temple and that any reference to the palace is secondary or a secondary interpretation.⁴¹

Conclusions

None of the available texts preserves the original text, and therefore the pieces of the puzzle have to be collected from the three main witnesses, Hebrew, Greek and Old Latin. As noted

³⁶ Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, pp. 268–270, tries to solve the problem by assuming that the same temple was meant for both the divinity and the king, but this seems to be an unlikely theory. Here he appeals to Amos 7:13, according to which Bethel was מֶכֶן הַשֶּׁבֶת. The passage is controversial, and it is not clear that the verse equates the same building as a temple and royal palace. It may only say that Bethel is a royal sanctuary used in the royal and state cult. It is more probable that 1Kgs 8 did not originally refer to the palace at all.

³⁷ Exod 15:17; 2Chr 6:30, 33, 39 (2Chr 6:2 follows 1Kgs 8:13); Ps 33:14.

³⁸ Ps 104:5 refers to the foundations of the earth, but this verse uses the plural and is not directly relevant to this discussion.

³⁹ Ps 89:15; 97:2; Isa 4:5; 18:4; Ezra 2:68; 3:3; Dan 8:11.

⁴⁰ The Vulgate follows the MT and renders the word as *firmissimum*.

⁴¹ Thus against many, such as Gray, *I & II Kings*, 196–197. With ‘little hesitation’ he translates בֵּית זָבֵל as ‘royal house,’ but the word זָבֵל does not necessarily refer to a palace. In fact, none of the other uses of the word in the Hebrew Bible, namely, Hab 3:11; Is 63:15 and Ps 49:15, refer to the royal palace. They rather show that the word may be used to refer to any residence or habitation.

by Anneli Aejmelaesus concerning variant readings, they should be weighed ‘against one another’ in order to reconstruct the original reading.⁴² None of the witnesses can function as the obviously better or more original text. Following this principle, the original text of 1Kgs 8:12–13 (3Reg 8:53^a) probably read:

Then Solomon said regarding the temple,	אז אמר שלמה על הבית
when he had finished building it:	ככלות לבנות אתו
‘The Sun(-God) made (it) known in the heavens,	שמש הודיע בשמים
Yahweh said, (he wants) to live in darkness:	יהוה אמר לשכן בערפל
Build my temple,	בנה ביתי
an exalted house for me,	בית זבל לי
a new place to live in’	מכון לשבת לחדש

Aejmelaesus further adds that ‘the original reading must show its originality by its own force.’⁴³ Although the here reconstructed text is not met as such in any of the witnesses, several considerations suggest that it is closer to the original reading than any of the extant witnesses: 1) In accordance with the ancient Northwest Semitic poetical texts, the reconstructed text consists of a bicolon and tricolon.⁴⁴ 2) The parallelism of the cola accords with the poetical rules. 3) The text only deals with the temple, which is in line with the general content of the chapter, the technical vocabulary (especially מכון) and the introduction

⁴² Aejmelaesus, ‘What Can We Know,’ p. 106.

⁴³ Aejmelaesus, ‘What Can We Know,’ p. 106.

⁴⁴ See, Loretz and Kottsieper, *Colometry*. Note that there are striking parallels between the here reconstructed text and some Ugaritic texts dealing with the same subject (I am grateful to Joanna Töyräänvuori for pointing out these parallels):

KTU 1.2 III 7–10	
Bn[]bht ym[Build a house for Yam (Sea)
rm]m hkl tpt [nhr]	Erect a palace for the Noble River
[btk]?rt?. ?[]	[in the middle of] ?
...	...
bn bht [z]blym	Build a house for the Lord Yam (Sea)
[r]mm hk[l tpt] nhr	Erect a palace for the Noble River?
bt k []p []	In the middle of?...

Another parallel is found in KTU 1.4. V 53–55:

KTU 1.4 V 53–55	
hš bhtm tbn[n]	Quickly you will buil[d] the house
hš trmmn hk[lm]	Quickly you will erect the palace
bt k šrt špn	In the middle of the stronghold of Sapan

Like the here reconstructed text of 1Kgs 8:12–13, the Ugaritic parallels also contain short cola that form tricola. For other parallels with bicola, see 1.4 IV 62–V 1; V 27–29. For discussion on these Ugaritic passages in more detail, see Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Volume I* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 235–237, and Mark S. Smith and Wayne T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Volume II* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 577–579.

by Solomon in the Greek text. 4) The reconstructed text is meaningful, in contrast with that of the Greek and Hebrew witnesses, which are, in part, incomprehensible. 5) The text conflicts with many other texts in 1–2Samuel and 1–2Kings, which explains why there have been so many attempts to eradicate the theologically problematical parts.⁴⁵

The reasons for the revisions are obvious. The oldest text suggested that Yahweh and the Sun-god were the same divinity,⁴⁶ that Solomon's temple was not the first temple in Jerusalem and that Yahweh lived in a temple. These theologically offensive ideas were gradually omitted in diverse ways, in different contexts and in different stages so that none of the resulting texts preserve the oldest text in full. They nevertheless show that there have been several attempts in various scribal contexts to censor the text.⁴⁷ Moreover, since omissions were used more than once in the revision of the passage, it seems probable that in the transmission of 1–2Kings omissions were not excluded from the range of options in correcting and improving the older text. Due to their nature, the existence of omissions is often very difficult to demonstrate, but 1Kgs 8:12–13/3Reg 8:53^a has proven to be a fruitful text in this respect.

It is surprising that vestiges of the older conceptions are preserved in relatively late witnesses. It implies that when the Septuagint translation of 1–2Kings was made in the 2nd century BCE⁴⁸ its Hebrew *Vorlage* still contained, in a recognizable form, the idea that Yahweh was a Sun-god or that he was identified with the Sun.⁴⁹ Although many scholars have come to the conclusion that Yahweh may have been associated with the Sun on the basis of archaeological and other evidence,⁵⁰ many Biblical texts, also in 1–2Kings, vehemently

⁴⁵ This passage shows that an understanding of the theological tendencies in the witnesses and in the broader narrative context of 1–2Kings is also necessary for an evaluation of the readings. It is unlikely that one would be able to reconstruct the original text of 1 Kgs 8:12–13 without being familiar with the development of theological conceptions in the Hebrew Bible and especially in the Former Prophets. The passage thus highlights the importance of collaboration between textual and redaction critics.

⁴⁶ Thus contrary to the suggestion of Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems*, pp. 268–270, that Yahweh and the Sun-god were two separate gods. Clearly, in the Second Temple period the peaceful co-existence of Yahweh and the Sun-god would have been theologically offensive as well.

⁴⁷ In addition to the here-discussed witnesses, other witnesses contain further theological corrections. For example, Targum Jonathan clearly represents a secondary development when it reads בִּירוּשָׁלַם instead of בְּעֶרְפֶּל or מִקְדָּשָׁא instead of זִבְלִי. The Targum is generally dependent on the MT and its secondary readings, but seems to represent an even further development where the theological corrections have been additionally extended.

⁴⁸ Many scholars assume that the historical books were translated in the 2nd century BCE. Thus, among others, Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2004), pp. 45–46.

⁴⁹ It is a very complicated question when each one of the revisions was made, but since all Greek witnesses, the LXX and the Antiochian, and the Old Latin contain elements that refer to the Sun-god, it seems probable that the reference to the Sun-god existed when the LXX was translated.

⁵⁰ For example, solar imagery was prominent in late monarchical Judah, see Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), pp. 248–281. Juliane Kutter, *nūr ilti*, pp. 355–417, has shown that there are traces of the identification of Yahweh with the sun in many parts of the Hebrew Bible. She assumes (pp. 414–417) that Yahweh's solar imagery is part of the general tendency in the Northwest Semitic realm to see various divinities as representing or being solar gods. She further calls for caution in seeing mythological aspects in every use of solar imagery when divinities are referred to.

criticize the worship of the Sun, which implies that the Sun was indeed worshipped in ancient Israel.⁵¹ All in all, 1Kgs 8:12–13/3Reg 8:53^a provides a strong case for assuming that many Biblical texts were comprehensively revised at a later stage in order to remove the last vestiges of older and allegedly erroneous theological conceptions.⁵² The present text also suggests that some of the revision took place much later than what is commonly assumed in Biblical scholarship.⁵³

⁵¹ For example, despite its criticism, 2Kgs 23:11 implies that items of a Sun god were located in Yahweh's temple. Criticism of the worship of the Sun is also found in Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2Kgs 23:5. It is clear why these passages would try to avoid the notion that Yahweh himself had been regarded as a Sun god.

⁵² The reference to the Book of the Song implies that the event may have been described in more detail there. It is perhaps not surprising that this book was not preserved because if it had contained details such as these verses, it would have contradicted many later conceptions.

⁵³ Anneli Aejmelaeus, 'Corruption or Correction? Textual Development in the MT of 1Samuel 1' in P. Torijano and A. Piquer (eds.), *Florilegium Complutense* (FS Julio Trebolle Barrera; Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming), has suggested that some of the theologically motivated corrections to the MT may have been made as late as the first century BCE.